

**Mad**

**BOWDEN**





Jonathan Bowden was born in Kent in 1962. Mr Bowden is an artist and a catalogue of his work will be published shortly. He is married and lives in London. This is his first book.

***BY THE SAME AUTHOR***  
**MAD**

*in preparation*

**ARYAN**  
**SADE**  
**BRUTE**  
**PROLE**  
**ONSLAUGHT**  
**JOY (*art book*)**

# MAD

by

Jonathan Bowden

EGOTIST PRESS

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**Jonathan Bowden**

**First Published in Gt. Britain in 1989**

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**Originally published in Great Britain by**

**Egotist Press**

**PRINTING HISTORY**

**Egotist Press edition published 1989**

**ISBN 1 872181 00 7**

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**Egotist Books are published by**

**Egotist Press**

**BM Egotist**

**London WC1N 3XX**

**Made and printed in Gt. Britain**

**Dedicated to  
Dorothy Bowden  
(1931–1978)**





Dedicated to Max Stirner; a man whose philosophy contradicts its truth.

‘We are entering a profoundly irreligious age, in which men as they are, will no longer be able to take religion seriously.’

apropos Dietrich Bonhoeffer

‘Cruelty is man’s energy uncorrupted by civilization.’

– Sade



# **The First Book of a Philosophic Tragedy**

**Guilt licks hungrily  
at the transparent  
purpose of an  
unclean heart.**





Terror is the chief motivation of civil behaviour. No other explanation does as well. It may depress us – indeed it should and much of the pessimistic nature of modern thought, stems from awareness, that what we have, what we hold and what we have been taught to cherish all stem from implements of iniquity; tools of degradation: culture would be defunct without criminality and human brotherhood was wrought by the branding-iron. Do we need more poignant or telling examples to dissuade us from the search for answers? Reasons as to why authority and only authority became the building-brick for civilization: the cement for social order. In one sense, no, but it is too literal and uncourageous a motive: despair can only be allowed after the facts of the case have been determined. Such pessimism is then neither stoical, pretentious, flashy or unilluminating, but profoundly relevant and ineradicable. Those who wish to destroy it will be hard put to find a way.

But do we realize what we're saying? If we insist on talking about humans in a mass sense then we downgrade the individual. If we reverse the rôles then we do violence to the facts. And these facts deindividualize

anyway because a race; a type; a genus; a collectivity of some sort always strives together – aggregately. Human collectives differ. They purport to thrive on voluntary participation. Infact they're just as offensive, cloying and uniform. Those taken up by them no longer have a particular existence as Jones, Smith or Brown: they're increments of what they might have been outside the group. So there's no dramatic change between the hightide of the animal and the onset of the human. There's more a continuation, an onward progression between two states. Cross-fertilization between troglodyte and man was sensory: both needed others; both feared solitude; both insisted on human companionship; stressed their own companionability no matter how mediocre and felt that life needed a purpose; for man, something to die for, a quest into which you could sink your teeth. Man feels more important in something larger than himself. Then again it could collapse without you. You needed a dream and a purpose to go with it. Together with a structure within which you could elaborate on the dream's purpose. Not all of this is negative. The individual's social relevance is positive. It's muddied when



this believes that a cell's decline is a measure of its organism's vigour (rather than the other way round). When he's trapped like this the individual rarely thinks himself free. It's inconsequential that the species gained something on the long march from animalism. Since a lot of the baggage has been dragged with us. Humanness did separate mortals admittedly. It gave each an evaluation of their own worth which amounted to a considered distinctiveness. The pity is it never went further. That the logic of bestial heritage prevailed. For the human twilight had been bovine, somnambulent, idyll rather than ideal: a situation where life drifted listlessly, susceptible to acts of nature, diurnal rhythms rather than rational understandings. In contrast, humanity's maturing to man – and – womanhood insinuated into our make-up a sense of difference, dislocation or displacement from everyone else. We discovered solitude and superiority. Learnt about our uniqueness for the first time and peeped over into the terror; the mindless, plumbless abyss, which lurked indistinctly at back of it. But our first problem momentarily obscured this. Others had forced themselves between us and a solution. They

existed; they had to be taken into account, after all, they were not so different from us, infact, remarkably similar, even erotically appealing in their baseness; they lived, breathed, spluttered, bathed, copulated and excreted in a manner not unlike us. Wherefore our pride; what source the origination of our particular hubris? In answering we need look no further than the mind. It was not so much the existence of others we objected to but the fact that this entailed competition between world-views; these were possible ways of seeing, unravelling what is and why it is, mental processes which were now up for grabs, subject to counter-vailing fact, interjection and interdiction, no longer those unblemished creations of your own faculties ascertained by you and solely by you that you might live in accordance with them. Now they had become common-property; folklorish; part of that stock-taking of common knowledge, which is so inhospitable to the creative genius, the intelligence capable of living creatively, the identity compelled to act in order to be what it is. To be or not to be. That is the question. The best and most important lines in any language. – And how we fear them. Abuse them! Defecate on



them! We loathe the formal splendour in which they're couched: the sheer ease with which they communicate what is so vital and yet so difficult to understand. It touches us on the quick and it does so because it flaunts our nature – our human nature – what in our rasher moments we consider the best thing about us, and it leaves us with little, save a glimpse of the infinite. It's a galling prospect. To know and not to know. To always be aware and yet forever seeking.

To think we need to be alone. We are never alone. Therefore we can't think. What!? There's a hole in the fence somewhere. Things are not what they seem. And this is because reality is double-edged; contradictory, impressionable and razor-sharp, with the paradoxical guile you associate with Janus; the fissionable articulateness more typical of Proteus. Don't forget that human beings are thinking animals. Human to the degree they aren't animal: to the extent reason leaps ahead of instinct and emotion fills the gap between the two. In such circumstances, our race is a full quantum leap ahead of its nearest rival. But we didn't stand around beating breasts in superiority. Survival outpaced all else. It is



a consuming passion: stronger than other competing pleasures, beyond all else, food, water, shelter, even sex, man and woman must live. It's conceited like most human emotions. But it's not ignoble. Without it nought else could share the sun. Survival determines the pattern and sets the scene. It also issues a challenge in that it goads you into making life less futile. Once you've survived you have to weigh up whether it was worth the trouble. Analysis is a fragile thing: strategies of mordant introspection always need protecting from the raw facts of existence; bread, flannel and toilet-bowl offer tangible rewards for little thought. Banality charms most individuals into submission. Those who don't lie down and die soon discover that happiness and intellect are at opposite ends of the pole. Even so: certain fools attempt the impossible. They want to live, to escape the prison they've made of their mind, yet humanity hauls them back to a common starting-point. A waylaid meridian among the multitude, which scarcely gives them a chance to breathe, to stretch out and partake of freedom's solitude. The miasma chokes, blinds and engulfs them: they are a part of it and it is a part of them. Individuals are

never free from it, only the condemned cell, the bier, and the terror of minute by minute existence without God lifts you clear. Even this peace is transitory: mere moments away from the pain. Flights of fancy from the cruelty we feel rising in our innards when confronted with unwelcome facts. Facts which declare our personalities to be aberrant from the general thrust of mankind: deviations from the homunculus at bottom of us. We find it difficult to escape this fate because we don't wish to. Yet we're dissatisfied. Intelligence chafes against restriction but secession, the denial of a shared humanity is never envisaged. The tension in this position has to be resolved and the upshot is deep contempt, a restless anxiety which the individual feels and communicates to those around him. A near hatred carried by desperation, born of self-contempt – hatred stems from self-disgust. You need practice in the art of loathing before you can exhibit proficiency. Odium is mortification on a romantic scale. It also needs objects to vent its ire upon. They're easy enough to find. Just look out for those who advance themselves into the limelight at other's expense. At the expense of those who do not do likewise: those



who've had their chance stolen by other's ascension. In direct contravention of Adam Smith competitiveness entertains no theory of moral sentiment. The duality it understands is victor and victim; depredated and usurper; trammelled and conquistador. Everyone who competes wants someone done down. Don't fool yourself. In such a climate, you can only aspire to noteworthiness; influence, positions of importance and esteem, even the exercise of power, if you're prepared to clamber over others to get there. You see, conflict between individuals is inevitable, when we're so different, yet so alike, in wanting the same things differently. Human beings must make up their minds, what do they want(?), exaltation or submission, glorification or security, the safety which comes from keeping heads below parapet level, or the excitement of a chase, which invites destruction. And those who resign themselves to inaction must understand that this doesn't absolve guilt. We are guilty for everything which leaves us indifferent. Unfortunately, this is only half of it, like the discordancies between two halves of an imagist impression, there lurks another side. We're incapable of freeing ourselves because we don't

wish to be free. And that's the saddest fact of all. We're encased within our expectations of life and the recurrent foretaste of death. In the first place, death isn't an end it's a beginning, a little death, which presages the adoption of something new. The ability to live each moment as if it were your last.

Life's essential fragility is preserved but with due regard for its importance. We know that we're perched on a knife-edge and the slightest oscillation kills us. Nevertheless, knowledge of this sort should enhance life not detract from it. It imbues bite; provides edge; makes weakness formidable and tempers fanaticism with magnanimity. In a peculiar way it makes life worthwhile. Destruction is acknowledged, the accident recognized, but the sense of meaninglessness which results from the fact that I could finish this line and walk under a bus finds itself frustrated. Suicide – the slashing of wrists before a mirror, which reflects the painful shortcomings in our self-esteem, ceases to be an option. Contingent frailty becomes inherent fortitude. Life can at least be accepted for what it is. A struggle between maturity and immaturity; sanity and mad-



ness; decency and indecency; thought and instinct; ebullience and despair; above all a fierce battle between those weak enough to have to murder, torture and destroy to get their way and those whose dominance is such that it need not stoop to domineering. In essence life is conflict between those in control and those endeavouring to throw off control. But if we reject suicide then we accept life, we agree to everything that goes with it. The pain, heart-break and suffering, a palimpsest which contrasts the beauties of nature with the throwing of acid in a child's face. Reality is all of a piece; you can't choose the good from the indifferent and leave the bad. You can value one against the other. You needn't ignore the worst; the horror, mutilation, sacrifice, and blood-stained ritual of war, for example. There is a way out. You can't outrun good and evil but you can confront them. You'll find evil everywhere perhaps even good, but don't bank on it, it's often liable to fall on stony ground, the historical record on the other hand gives proof of human baseness which can't be ignored. Morality sniffs the good in the evil. Immorality looks to itself. Indeed we're no longer children to be satisfied with a rendition of truth that



leaves malice unspoken. In the abstract, the seamless empyrean philosopher's dream but never find, freedom has little to do with moral balm, kindness, charity, fellow-feeling, it has as much to do with cruelty, sadism, the snaring of moral principle, in the torture of a child, just for the hell of it because it gives you pleasure. Freedom's as free as the wind, little more than antinomian license to do what you want; go where you will; be what you are; without thought, conscience or expectation; except that everyone must chance upon the same lest things fall through. Liberty does what it wants and is what it is and this depends on everyone having a chance to do the same. You can't be free in a crowd; a crowd's only free when it ceases to be one. The case of the individual against authority rests when all individuals are alike in their difference. When each breath lasts a lifetime – inturn – spans no longer than the moment before you pitch forward putrefaction in your nostrils. The task of philosophy is to prepare men to face death always remembering that Reinhard Heydrich did it better. Now we're at the heart of things because we've retraced our steps back to where we began. Remember: we started

with birth not death; after all, you can't die unless you're alive first. We wring our hands over life because we fear its end; we loathe the inevitability of death to such an extent that we can scarcely enjoy the life which promises so devastating a finality. But why fear death? By its very nature death is a finite and irreversible phenomenon. A once-in-a-lifetime happening, it strikes down those in their prime as well as the aged and infirm and it does so with equal ease, like the religions which emerged to comfort us in our ordeal, it is universal, forever relevant and inescapable. Do you still need to know why it's feared. Yet something's missing. Perturbation knows not itself. We're not afraid of death merely the anxiety we lavish on it. The sacrist who glimpses life after death snatches at the forlornness of what goes before. Life is abortion. Although the civilized mind admits it not. We hate what we are; we are what we hate; we deliver what we abhor; we fear the cadaver because we know it well; we die when we haven't lived; and we haven't lived because we don't know how to die. A moment's pause for man – ladies and gentlemen – I beg your indulgence!



But all is not lost. It cannot be. A man may be destroyed but he cannot be defeated. Life's too tenacious to die. Existence is too tame to realize it. We need to find a middle-way, a centrism of the heart, open to noon and twilight, adolescence and the cracking of the flesh, life and ague, death and renewal. Not too dire you understand but not anaemic enough to avoid all pain. Something that links us to the past and makes the future familiar. What better than our shared humanity? The limitless panoply of flesh, teased and stretched between historical dates, magnificent climaxes, Michelangelo and supersonic travel, Christ and Hitler, all things to all men at all times, moving onwards borne by the heavings of inarticulate muscle that vouchsafe its future. Across the generations, down the ages, bespattered with sperm, drenched in blood, strewn with spent umbilicals, the false promise to outbid all others, lies heavy on the horizon of the mind. We're dependent on everyone else; why not live through the consequences of such dependence? Those who go before us end up behind us in order to reassure us over our destiny. They're as distant as strangers; as close as bed-fellows, known



intimately, repudiated utterly. We can't live without them, we walk on ground composted from their substance: pathways of tessellated corpses which certify survival, indicate renewal, make of death a bore, of life an endurance. We survive in the memories of those who come after us. We know what they will: each layer issues from the next when it tastes death in its throat. You can't call a halt, nothing can, you're born, exist in an interim, copulate in the meantime and recreate not yourself but the species as related genealogically to yourself. After which death needn't paralyze, what's to fear(?) survival's guaranteed, the adjective in man reforms, subdivides and reforms with amoeba like fissiparity forever and a day, you don't need a religion, it's no wonder that humanism is modern man's religion. But don't congratulate yourself! The difficulty's just begun. Humanity's a limbless carcass crawling into the future on bloodied stumps: but this isn't all. Things would be easier if it were. Let's reduce complexity to clarity: you live now and die later, humanity lives forever and knows not death, you're human, you perish, the humanity of which you're a part lives on perpetuating the degree to which you were

party to it. All clear? Not entirely . . . mortality is personal, faced alone in the shutters of the mind, to know your end, accept your finish, and endure redemption, as a palliative, strung out into the future to make it easier for others . . . this is hard to take, it points to a rift between you and humanity. Everyone has contempt for man, the ungainliness of his form, his hanging jowls, his spavined gait, the differences in sex which time erodes and so on . . . it remains inarticulate and unfocused because it has nowhere to go. The alternative is too bleak. Separatism: divorce from your own kind: division not into kith and kin but from all kith and kin is too harsh a concept; too literal a diagnosis. It involves living each moment as if death were the next. Nevertheless something must be done. Individual life guarantees renaissance midst endless flow. Less transport of the flesh than flesh transported. Able to hurdle the loins of an ill-starred humanity and push out new life, in endless stream, with constant ripples of ejaculation and surprise, less love-making than love-act, sex, seen not as an act of will but voluptuous surrender to all acts of willing, a whirlpool of basilisk eyes, gaping mouths and twitching limbs, a medieval



tapestry as visualized by Bosch, so man might stave off individuality in congress, ensure the species ends a life not a life the species. Come what may, one problem won't go away. What to do with the 'I', the individual who won't die. The man who begs freedom with a begging bowl. Who fears to take it yet cannot renounce it: who longs to encompass it yet finds himself driven to disparage it. Neither is satisfactory: none can be avoided. Life is a cheat, a fraud, an echo. Like the death it resembles, it begins to end a little way from the start. The key to understanding our humanity is the fact that we cannot escape from it. Indeed, our humanity resembles an enormous space, constricted, narrow, but nevertheless clear-sighted, with a palpable momentum all of its own, a bit like a wind-tunnel. within which you can see where you're going but not where you are. It provides a structure within which you can live. Comfortable in the knowledge that death need not be faced. Certitude that we are not dying whilst we are alive is more important than anything else. Here it is buried beneath a heap of related assumptions. Only humanity when seen as an abstraction undulating down the centuries



can serve as remembrance for those who went before. The ancients believed that immortality rested on posthumous reputation. An impossibility! Few individuals survive – who remembers the name of a slave, except Spartacus, a man who led a rebellion of the slaves; no! man survives collectively, through birth and rebirth of the common denominator within himself. And it is precisely this: the funeral epithet or lapidary valediction cast by a Caesar's or Napoleon's name which makes them important. Nothing else: biographical tittle-tattle is neither here nor there. What matters is that these men represent an ideal. Larger than themselves; smaller than what they might have been. History is horrific or if some among you cannot accept that, then suffice it to say, that history contains horrific deeds. It is largely male as well. Many women avoid it as a consequence. A tragedy but not so great a one as the fact that leading men commit the grossest misdemeanours their followers would be capable of. Why evil; wherefore base? What reason can possibly be found to explain the perniciousness of rule: whether secular or ecclesiastic; whether dictatorial or democratic – why do those in power behave

badly whilst endeavouring to get there and badly once the sought after office has been achieved? We must know, we have to know and without the desire to know we're dead meat. Inside the head, buried in the heart, we've already renounced the vital spark of life. Enquiry is the stuff of life, its zest, ardour, urgency and catalyst, without it the senses harden, moral discernment waxes languorous and peters out . . . Life was once reckoned a chase, now the quality's determined by how urgently the end is pursued. Death hid life from us. What took on the form and insubstantive lucre of life released us from death: but at a price: and the toll, the payment of tribute our worse fears demanded resulted in nothing but fear itself. Fear of others; fear of ourselves; shame at what lurked in our hearts: itself reflection of what existed in our rivals. Especially when we know what dwells at the bottom of every soul. What the first man saw in his neighbour every man has had occasion to see in himself. We see the worst because we expect the worst. Why? It is in our nature to do so. We would rather not think about it but we cannot avoid it: consciousness won't let us forget that life is a struggle to put another down.



Where at any moment, we must be prepared to humiliate, syphon off pride, debilitate by degree, wound, injure and mortify, always and at every turn lest the same fate befall us. Another's loss of pride is our saving grace. With it we can be sure – oh! so sure of the response of those we have to live through. And as yet we've found no other way to live – afraid of death – because we can't appreciate what to do with the time it takes to die, we must have recourse to other's lives and sensibilities, we must know them, touch them, fondle them, have sex with them, articulate our lives through a verisimilitudinous parade of touch and counter-touch, felt – thought and perceived emotion. Love and hate; *odi et amo* said Catallus, I love and hate the object of my desire with simultaneous breaths, and it's enough to put me out of sorts and set me trembling, with the unendurable – if not slightly quixotic – pain of it all. Hate's especially important. Particularly at the beginning . . . When the forefathers of our millenium, the patriarchs of our somewhat desultory descent, down through the aeons and across the recorded centuries, acted to make the world what it is. It has remained true to their original conception of it. When



one man saw in another what he feared most. When one man realized that subservience is mastery viewed from the other side. When one man foresaw that revolt meant tyrannicide and the erection of new tyrannies for old. All of this had to come to pass before cruelty was able to make itself civilized. When each saw, mirrored in another's face, the consequences of his acts. During the Korean War, the Chinese segregated out from their captives the leaders. Those who evinced a certain independence of spirit. And their number always remained constant, at around five per cent of the total. Whether true or not as a statistic, it hints at something wider. It says that those with the need to dominate and destroy remain numerically small. Small comfort in itself, when we look at the historical record and see which fraction has made all the running. It couldn't have been otherwise: it was true to form. Yet it hinted at a resolution: if those who needed to triumph were so few, then there was every chance that they would take to falling upon themselves. After all, like attracts like and those who set out to dominate, never rest, lest someone wrests their dominance from them. The predatory nature knows no rest,

since it has to remain vigilant, in its search for victims. This creates its own problems. Ever on the lookout; continuously in search of dominion, the nature consumed with pride, is always likely to fall foul of its rivals. It is a nature heading for a fall. Prone to self-destruct, as a consequence of its desire to overreach. Heedless acrimony; the darksome desires, of glorifying in another's abasement, are never enough to create a society. These emerge when man's instincts hold back from the brink. Moments of respite, born of the desire to survive, when self-preservation outweighs all other considerations. Especially when you abandon yourself to the delicious tasks of using another. Such moments only mature when allowed to. When an external force imposes itself on human passions. A force at once regulatory and inhibiting; arbitrary and heavy-handed. Drawn from what it will replace: expressive of what it was created to extend. A blinding flash of physical force and teleological argument. Where theory does not contravene action; nor action theory, since action's interpretation is vintage theory. Suppose you enter a devastated city at nightfall. In order to rebuild it, after you have essayed the damage and



the potentialities for reconstruction, you set out to collect what's needed to rebuild. What, after all, is débris but the foundation stones of the future at one remove. You collect what you think necessary in one abandoned place. This is the point at which reconstruction begins. But in order to clear the ground you wreak more havoc in a place already destitute of order. To rampant disorder you've added your own approximation to order: this may suit the rôle of engineer you've adopted: another man may think you a vandal. Now consider the same thing in a different context. Look at the human condition in a state of nihilistic confusion, bereft of civilized armour, unable to prise good from evil, or tell right from wrong. How would you go about constructing a civilization from this anthill of competing desires? After all, in the two kingdoms of insect and mammal only the human and the ant prey upon themselves. To rectify this you ought first to take advantage of it. Prey on that which preys upon itself: use what is utilizable, bend what is bendable, dispose of what is disposable once it has been used. Inject muscle into what lies to hand. Prove more resolute and less immovable than the alternatives on



offer. And what are these alternatives (?) nothing but the threat of force and the implementation of that threat. Prior to the establishment of a state, life is nasty, brutish and short. Nothing changes once a state's created. Only the longevity of the participants alters. And even that's arbitrary. Prey to chance fluctuations, almost as damaging as the brute struggle between individuals who survive to struggle rather than struggle to survive. Reminiscent of Bosch's 'gardens of delight': a continuum of advance, control, superimposition, climax, death, regeneration and reincarnation, where each individual marries with another. To splice is to wound. Yet every contact purports to be an attempted liberation. Because when you control another you cease to exist: you die into the conception of your own power. We have all done it. We have all had occasion to do it. Life is based on it. Yet we only understand it once we have been given the chance to move beyond it. Not only – as Maeterlinck observed – do we falsify something by giving it utterance: we also make true the falsity of the past when we stand aside from it. In this case civility apes its origins: proving how far we've come and how little

we've gained. Where the imposition of order is the reordination of chaos. The application of that destructive spirit which leaves every building a charred ruin; every mortal reduced; every woman angry. Rebuild in the stillness which follows the storm. But don't think cruelty's been shut out: it's been turned to account. Everything's been built to the specifications of a cruelty too strong to stand against. Remember: cruelty is man's energy uncorrupted by civilization. Baudelaire was right: when you want to discuss cruelty we always go back to de Sade. But the other half of the syllogism's left hanging. Since civilization serves to corrupt cruelty rather than man. He remains as cruel, uncivilized and indifferent to the plight of others as he was before, with one important exception, such an attribute has less chance to show itself. After all, cruelty and fear are proportionate to one another. The greater the one the greater the other; you leave one with less chance of manoeuvre, once criminal behaviour's been taken out of the hand of the individual and given to the collective. Then you might create a civilization. Still based on murder but this time it's a cleaner sort of killing, swaddled in judge's ermine, drip-



ping with official certification, enacted in white tiled oubliettes where the cries echo in a manner the citizenry can't hear. And how do you get from one state to the other? Simple. Apply individual cruelty, on a scale which brooks no disobedience. A civilization rests on force and comes into existence when every scream is part of the design. Inhumanity is always sacrosanct: we're not dealing with morality here: that is a matter for the individual. Collectives deal not in morals but expediency; not in conscience but judicious expenditures of force. A ruler really has power in his hands, when he can decide what's wrong and what's right. From moment to moment, enforcing this, prescribing that, the one an offence, the other a beneficence, whilst the blood cries out to high heaven for a reckoning it won't receive. Here, each scream has its place, every anthromorphic prodding of the system, resolves itself, in a patchwork quilt of condemnation and reward. Rulers enforce criminal jurisdiction when they decide what's crime and whose committed it. Law was created from its opposite. Law was created to forestall its opposite. Law is legalized crime: sanctimonious mendacity for those who mulct the system. Murder's



still the name of the game. Yesterday it was criminal; today it is the law. But now it's undergone a subtle alchemy: it no longer strikes at those who defy a particular will. Once men fought one another to escape themselves. Now they fight themselves not to break with one another. Those who do so 'break the law'. Send a shiver of chiliaric fear down a bourgeois nape: set up the demand for retribution from a thousand throats. Originally men went in fear of each other. Now they go in fear of the law. The sum total of their fear of each other: an emotional minefield, where trespass warrants retribution, against the peace of mind vouchsafed those who obey the law. Before the implementation of law men make their own. This was to be expected. Without a state, in a natural state, bereft of signposts for measuring good and evil, the individual proceeds in his own fashion. Subject to his own needs; disciplined by lack of constraint. Heeding the voice which tells him to dominate lest he be dominated. Each person comes to him a threat; goes from him a remnant, a silhouette, a hand staining a wall just above ground. Individuals who cross his path learn to toss and turn; thwack and thwain in an empyrean of pain: an

operative disharmony, with no basis but flesh and mind subjected to control. Relatively free from hate, which as it must exist – remains impersonal, consequent on the process itself . . . the desire to escape life, death and moral decision at one gallop. And why should this be so? Because man is too weak, slovenly and shamefaced: poignant decisions made by individuals are too much for that little seeming substance: they form echoes which cut too near the bone. Men and women can't live at the limit of moral extremity, lest they fall prey to hysteria. Human beings can't take too much reality, without the relief afforded by an opiate. And what does the drug – the momentary laxative which suspends reality – block out? If not life itself: the notion of a single breath, drawn in an atmosphere of unrelieved ill-feeling. A cry, rasp or shout torn from an individual, rosily crucified, on the cross of personal decision. The bleak awkwardness of existence; its architectural drabness, grey upon grey, at once spherical and unilinear, jagged about the edges whilst remaining well-rounded in its common-placeness: this is the nausea, the sense of despair, of utter decadence, against which we must fight: clichés of the existen-



tialist canon, toward which, most individuals give themselves no choice but submittance. Moral bleakness, emotional bleakness, psychological bleakness, physiological distaste: these are its attributes, none of them a salve, all of them a wound in the side. A lesion in the flesh, a fracturing of the spirit of the human: and about what do these feelings constellate, if not death, the ultimate significance of failure and non-existence. We are all failures because we all die. Animals fight for life. Humans will do the same, when put in a corner, but when left to roam free, they resign themselves, to the fact that it's not worth fighting against the inevitable. Heidegger was wrong: the question is not existence, not being, but what we think we should do about it – here, ethics not epistemology is the important thing. What galls us is that we are going to die and whatever we might do counts for nothing. In any event, we only want to linger a moment longer, in order to husband a little extra time, time in which we can despair of doing what's necessary to ward off death. You see, the more alive, the more aware, the more aware: the more foredoomed. Each requiem strives to obliterate itself: you



suffer more when you strive more, but you don't suffer less when you live with less intensity, you merely become less aware of your own suffering. Such procedures suck life's vitality. They make it less earnest; less real; each experience moves further away from what it should be, an ice axe, sharp enough to shatter the frozen sea inside of ourselves. Anyone with a strong feeling for life feels its correspondence; tastes the transitoriness which makes it mortal. Death gives life its finiteness; life gives death its absolution. One can't exist without the other. Questions about death are shunned by an audience of millions. Without this they couldn't go about their business: couldn't rise from the horizontal; greet each new day with the promise to work harder; beget relatives astride of the grave as is their wont. One needs the other; humanity needs them both. Death is release, ecstasy, sexual taboo and correspondence, at once different, almost rarefied, and yet near to hand. Real and surreal; constantly inconstant; reified and sworn to secrecy: death gives life everything but serenity of conscience. To live is to apprehend the difference between existence and nothingness. Life isn't the word

made flesh; but the word come forth from the flesh. Medicine tells us that life stops when the pulse stops. Ethics tells us that life ends when the mind ceases to speak. Thought began with the word. Life ends with a whisper. Words are the currency of life. Life coins words to suit its purpose. We know what we are because we think we do. Muse harkens to meaning rather than thought disdains. Poesy ennobles; silence defames. Don't forget that. Without the words we wouldn't have the vision necessary to go with the words. And words open the way for us; becoming the counters, we make use of in the articulation of thought. In these troubled times, thinking which is not indelibly stamped with life becomes a luxury. Anything which refuses to consider how we might live without despair falls into dilettantism. But if life pertains to thought's inner-most circle; how do we stop the sensitive, the profound intelligence, from sensing the futility of its endeavour, when confronted with birth and death, zygote and humus, rudimentary beginning and irrefutable end. The fact that death swallows up the thought and the life which gave it voice. Indeed, rumination, cognitive foreplay, gradually becomes unwholesome, even



odious, what can it absolve? What does it serve to prolong? What does it bring in its wake? To what end do we lift the curtain on knowledge (?) laying bare nought but the empty sound-stage, which serves as echo for our innermost bleating, before all is turned to dust. Yet if thought is epitaphal, fit for the mausoleum door, would it not be better to excommunicate it? Nothing extends life; thought serves to prolong the pain of parting. Abolish thought; abolish death: re-enact it at a lower level than the mind, out of the instincts, from whence we reasoned emotionally. The solution was not to think about life at all. Man renounced pain by ignoring his capacity to endure it. Freedom became the choice to remain unfree. Freedom has two faces: license and morality. Humanity chose restrained license instead. Moral responsibility weighs present moment against future nullity. This was deemed bad for the soul. The previous muddle and inefficiency which passed for 'liberty' was superseded. Each decision could be seen to be part of a greater whole, of which it was an integral part. Each maxim inferred another, intimately concerned with itself. No one factor could be isolated from another, rather, all strove to



keep their rivals in the shade. Whilst none sought outright dominance because such procedure would reduce the scope for their own sovereignty. Consequently, from this day forth, the individual's life could not be said to be his own. Moreover, this was a fact which did not trouble him unduly. It was what he wanted. The price paid was letting others think for us. Men became each other's vassal; incapable of thinking for themselves. The Romantic view of man held him to be a noble savage corrupted by civilization. Romanticism tends toward the solitariness which is part of its definition. You could have been happy if you'd been born alone: struck blind, deaf and dumb to the existence of others, an autistic child in an Eden of your own imagining. The Fall was not occasioned by consumption of the apple which dictated a propensity to sin. Men 'fell' when they realized they were not alone. Innocence is solitary; vice is communal. Hell is other people. Yet innocence is no virtue in a community of more than one. Lacking social utility it must be dispensed with. In its stead comes the matrice of social discourse, resembling the lattice stitched onto skin after injury, a gamut of human relations, where every soul knows

itself through another. An impolity of standardized desires and redundant tastes. Safety comes in numbers; strength belies ignorance, communicability glamour and truth appropriateness. Life's object is to avoid death's end. Once that's established all else follows. Your life becomes a nightmare which seeks relief in its own annulment. The less discerned; the less fearful; the more understood, the greater one's fear. Tribulation and knowledge are inextricably intertwined. A Gordian Knot broken when the scraps of sensibility necessary for its manufacture have been lost. When death sports no ogreish grin because it's as commonplace as the life it continues. Life and death change places in a fugue, dedicated to the sequestration of human assets. Life becomes death and death life. One adopting the life-mask of the once dead; the other settling for the death-mask of those who once sucked air. We avoid death's consequences, when we don't know life well enough, to guess its transitory nature. And how do we do this? How is so deep a reversal in human instinct to be affected? When we are not in sole possession of the conduct of our lives. When the crowd around us impinges upon



us; inveigles us into the interiors of their lives, pressures us to respond, rebuffs us with their insolence, beguiles us with their solicitation. We are never alone and never with them. We are part of them and not quite ourselves. We feel their pressure and know their distaste. We are not alive and not completely dead. We are not quite sane but not adjudged mad. What are we? But normal men and women fulfilling our social responsibilities. Hardly. We are the stuffed men, the hollow men – in Eliot's poem – whose sense of difference, speciality or uniqueness has been sloughed down into a common stock-taking. Dispelled with anger; enhanced by self-righteousness. The one form of individuality left open to us is a predatory one . . . at once an escape, a fulfilment and a depredation. Where the litmus-test accorded character, the ardour and imagination we bring to everything we do, is measured by the aggressiveness we are wont to show in our dealings. A fixity of purpose, which dedicates itself, to escaping from the life to be otherwise led. Not to know life reduces mortality's shadow. You must first know a body before you can measure a corpse. Life is what we think it is. Death holds no terror for us. Once



contemplation of its emptiness sets us to trembling. Now the emptiness is located within ourselves. It is not a question of death's seed lying in man's bosom; of death lying in contradistinction to life, or put another way, each moment lived, every moment died. The distinction between life and death has been fatally blurred. Instead of contemplation we have action; head-long drive rather than stoic asservation; a freneticism as near as dammit to St. Vitas' Dance in an effort to hide the vacuum at its centre. In such circumstances, philosophy becomes a species of illness or social maladjustment. A failure to see how it is. A misunderstanding as to our prime purpose, which supposes the less thought the greater happiness. Death's finiteness is forgotten. Its inevitability traduced. Why bother about it at all? Just don't start screaming till the end. Juxtapose it with boredom not pleasure. After all, autobiographies lie all the time when they avoid excretion and death. As long as we cling to the possibility of diversion, distraction and dissociation, we can escape death, when we appreciate life so little as to be unaware of its loss. A fate worse than death . . . when people aren't needed as friends, relatives, competitors or

enemies but victims. In a situation, where each life is tied up with those around it; interdependent not independent, at a loss when not together, lonely by yourself, afraid when part of the group and not master of it. Yet how can a man best live through others, unless he is sure of each action, taken as regards himself. Until he knows each response. Foresees every outcome. Knows with a terrible certainty, what is to be done, to whom, by whom, on any occasion which suits. A certitude rendered all the more terrible because it's illusory. The product of an over-wrought imagination attempting to master itself. When the danger isn't real. A fact which seems to provoke behaviour out of all proportion to what is desired. Ultimate assurance is always totalitarian. When doubt is suspect, dialectic unforgivable and ambiguity discounted. An ancient hebraic saying has it; that the man who considers himself fifty per cent right is worth knowing; the man who increases this to sixty per cent becomes dangerous; seventy-five per cent and he has passed the limits of human frailty; one hundred per cent and he has become a threat to the species. At such a pitch scant room is left for pity. Life's aim was to avoid indul-



gence in the emptiness within ourselves. We are something rather than nothing because we find it displayed in another's conduct. Something which indicates communication between sentient life-forms. Humans attracted and repulsed by the sources of their familiarity. A danger to one another, when the unpredictability of their conduct, encompasses misanthropy. The denial of what was otherwise seen; the absence of the skull beneath the skin when we look at each other. At this juncture fear of another leads to action against him. He could be the most harmless thing imaginable. Yet you would never know. You could never turn your back on him with confidence. Always he would be there to torment you. Imagine the fluttering in your heart, when a stranger walks towards you in a darkened street . . . repeated over and over again, driving you to distraction, maddening you to irresolution . . . until you realize, that only when he is the slave and you are the master, will you have peace of mind. The infliction of pain guarantees your well-being. Its avoidance leaves you prey to anxiety. No-one wants to administer torment. Some feel driven to. Many will go out of their way to avoid a scene. In

the majority of cases emotional turmoil is always disagreeable. This is likely to be no exception. First and foremost, the object of vituperation is remonstrated with, pleaded with. All he has to do is obey you in all things at all times and all will be well. Unfortunately, many individuals cling to their own dignity. Ignorant of psychology, they suppose that recusance will be tolerated. In the face of catastrophe, they remain impervious to reason. Recalcitrant and incorrigible; they discount any threat. Behaviour which resembles the twitching of a blind man's stick, as it fails to uncover the pit which lies before him. As the fear, the demon, in the pit of the persecutor's stomach, drives him on to new excesses. Wriggling this way and that, under the travail of conscience, the tormentor would rather do anything than behave in this way. Contrary to much religious belief man only reluctantly enters into sin. Afterwards, the slope toward immorality, seemed all the more sheer, and your justifications all the more precipitous, but to begin with there is a troubled conscience. Odium would make itself felt in the cross each of us must bear. The internal dialogue between virtue and necessity. When you listen to one you



doom the other. When you listen to both you render yourself impotent. Because a conscience, when it goes before a man, reduces the ability to strike. It hinders action and makes of contemplation a sweet dotage. Save when it turns itself to the cares of this world; power, corruption, murder, lust, vainglory and other vices. Whose aspect it fashions in a glass of its own devising. The more to ameliorate the passions spent betimes. That art might cathartically renew their tragic grandeur come the morn. You could have acted differently had you been alone. The presence of others stimulates a character's worst nature. Since you are too frightened of them to remain at peace. They threaten your integrity; the understanding of your own futility. Once they are present to disparage the keenest of its wits. Now obsolete because another makes it so. Look at him over there! What is he up to now? What is he thinking? How might I address him? Is salutation permissible? Should I love him as a brother or condemn him as a bastard come to seize my estate? Every man sees his fate mirrored in the iris of his worst imagining: when another comes into view. What might he do to me if I were to give him the chance?

Murder and despoil me and leave my body by the wayside without benefit of funeral, respect or standard admission to the kingdom of the dead. Human-kind justifies assault as a form of pre-emptive defence. Thus it has ever been. So it will ever be. The onlooker comes to represent the insubstantiality of our own breath. In that the prospect of our own death is quickened by contact with others; there lies our epiphany, apocalypse, salvation and resignation. We are afraid to be by ourselves now that others exist. We would not have others exist in order to torment us. We must create a world in which either there is no pain or if there is we are the ones to inflict it. First, we'll slap the interlocutor's face, pull his hair, rip his clothing, roll him up on the ground and otherwise defame him. Then we'll let him up and see if he knows how to behave. All one individual ever asks of another is that he might be sure of him. Remember: life is an attempt to gain assurance of another's good-will. When this is defined as a disinclination to harm. Each plea mindful of death, watchful of demise, desirous of escape, not into life as the negation of death but into death as the confirmation of life. Man as a social



animal preys on the society which leaves him less than an animal, definitely a man, not quite an individual, lacking a death which is personal as well as irreducible. Had he been alone he could have faced this. Now he has a twin it has become unbearable. Each face in the crowd mocks at the insufficiency of our own soul. Too weak, altogether too hollow a container is the soul, it cannot live without hope, without the tender stroke of another's regard, without the trenchant curse of another's disdain. We cannot live, we cannot think, we cannot die, we can only endure when others are present. They coax and tease when we want to be coaxed and teased; they scoff and scold when we want to be scoffed and scolded. They won't let us alone when we cannot bear to be left by ourselves. Alone with the beating of our own pulse, the cadence of our own thoughts, the hammering of our own conscience, the inevitability of our own death. We run from death into the arms of another who like ourselves is fleeing from its embrace. Together we grapple for dominance over what's left of ourselves. Especially when we're afraid of what he might do to us. Once someone's been

pinioned, his tormentor will let him up when he sees that resistance is at an end. Now he can turn his back with confidence. Secure in the knowledge that such a move will not signal revolt. After all, one man's freedom is another's imprisonment, one man's duty another's constraint, an individual's conscience nought but a grammatical fiction suitable for his rival's amusement. When one man offers another freedom he does so in good faith. He urges him not to be a fool or a martyr to individual scruple. Let him admit that civilized life begins when the anarchy of conscience is overridden by administrative fiat. Absolute freedom is neither infinite or desirable. Freedom consists in obeying orders. True liberty is the scope you have to interpret a command. Independence is measured in the dimensions of your cell. The pursuit of happiness is an illusion. When life wants to combat fear and keep one eye awake. All the average man or woman asks from authority is that when it strikes it does so cleanly. Especially when an individual refuses to play the game. The only recourse you have – frightened out of your wits by this unexpected opposition – is to berate the misfit further. Make an example of him,



after all, he's the only example to hand. Should there be more than one myrmidon his wife could be raped. Of course, there are other avenues of persuasion and degradation yet to be explored. The man could have his children's throats cut in front of his eyes. This might guarantee decorous behaviour in future. Although you could never be sure. Something which cannot be allowed. When you have to inflict pain in order to gain obedience. Every torturer finds something artistic in his work. Contemplation would not be too far-fetched a word for it. Since the manipulation of the senses, serves a double purpose; it pushes the carrion away from you as it beckons him closer. As each infliction of agony; leaves him less willing to rebel. Moves him closer to that state of obedience to which you aspire. On the other hand, the reduction of a living, breathing and thinking human being, demeans the humanity of one and the dignity of the other. This was how it was meant to be; coupled with its opposite. Facts which are liable to provoke a burst of frenzy from the inquisitor. So that he can see his inhumanity reflected in the dilation of his subject's eyes. In order to render his charge plastic, ductile, morally

translucent and malleable; capable of all manner of contortion when in the throes of lesion and agony. Surely the man who can inflict such agony is scarcely human himself. And needs to be convinced of this. Yet a law of diminishing returns operates here. Each action has cessation written all over it. Here, someone tortures someone else. The process has a logical conclusion in the death of the Individual. His very presence, aside from his future conduct, constitutes a danger to you; a threat to what you call your own. He represents death, your consciousness embalmed in the fabric of another, as yet unknown to you. Not only does he place you in mortal danger . . . he also stands between you and the recognition of your own death. The only sure knowledge of what it is to be alive. Forseeably the two of you could peacefully co-exist. In fact, no such co-existence is possible. While he exists you could never be sure of his intentions. Does he intend your obedience to be his own escape from despair? Since control of another is meant to undermine control over yourself. The less free, the less unhappy, the more content, the less mordantly expectant. Authoritarianism obviates the



agony which imparts understanding to individual life. Models your life processes around the behaviour of another. Turns blood into water and tragedy into dirge. Guillotines the individual on the scaffold of another's redemption. Succeeds in removing fear, from the stage where his life is enacted. By virtue of the expedient, which exorcises the individual from the man, in order to man the bridgehead against death. The mortality which is the holy terror to our dreams; the agency whereby achievement turns to dust. Yet is such a procedure adequate; whilst another draws breath. An inhalation and exhalation: drawn to the debit of your own integrity. Ever since you became aware of his existence his death has been on the cards. For let's face it, the aetiology of murder begins with the terror of non-identity: when the question is asked of it: why am I alive rather than dead, extant not immaterial, being rather than nothingness. To circumvent this; you forcibly enlisted another's co-operation. He became the object of your scorn, the touchstone of your own transliteration. Malleable, soft and pliable; he was at once non-chalent and aggressive. His obedience was sought to allay certain fears. Thenceforth,

what had been defined defined your responses to life. After all, what you do with others tells us what you think about yourself. Interpersonal relations are the arena where all moral values are ultimately tested. You were no longer responsible for your actions, the thoughts which underlay them, the sophistries you used to justify them, once a certain point had been passed. When the autonomy of moral decision making has been cast off. Once another controlled your activities to the extent you controlled his. Masters need slaves and slaves masters; that they might bask in mutual ignominy; triumph in reflected ingloriousness. The trouble with such a procedure is that it cannot be trusted. Once a process of dominion has reached its climax, it cannot halt. Only one thing stays the executioner's hand – fear, of what he does not know, does not wish to know and can never know. It is all very well to seek solace in murder. After all, the next homicide could be yours. Thoughts such as these sober a man. The axe may not fall from his hand but he might grip it less tightly. One mode of feeling makes way for another. He becomes ashamed. At last he understands that you can exist in an environment with-



out seeking its submission. In this state of mind, he draws back, uncertain how to behave. Yet sensitive lullabies cannot last; they prove defective because of their serenity, the nature of their passivity, they accept, but do not attempt to alter. Freedom is an active resignation, not a passive condolence. In any event, death is too near. Given that you are already intimately involved with the wretch. Correspondent to a nexus which articulates pleasure and pain; serenity and insatiability; blood-lust and desire for order.

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When everything is permitted; nothing will be found to exist save death. Death is man's cardinal reality: an act of danger, complete self-absorption, becoming, in the moment of transfiguration, complete self-negation. One is freed; one is dominated; one dies, one is reborn out of the ashes of such a sacrifice. A sacrifice where you seek absolution in the sealing of another's lips. Freedom is achieved through enslavement to the passionate need for its absence. Freedom is best served, in the erection of a scaffold. Do you think this process any different? Especially, when destruction

involves a delicious guilt. You were moved to destroy because you were afraid to die. It is inevitable, though hardly laudable. You viewed another with circumspection because in his breath, you saw your own mortality draining from the glass. Suicide is always an option, an attempt to answer the question: if we all die; why do we live first? Immolation proceeds either from bravery or emotional dislocation. Consequently, mankind entertains two views on the subject. Yet suicide, the solo euthenasia, deflects men's minds by replacing one problem with another. We do not kill ourselves because we fear life more than death. Given the fact, that it's the sole guarantee we're not dead already. A grey, importunate existence, viscous to the touch, dissoluable to the memory, which annuls itself, when another falls prey, to that desire for annulment. A resolution of the conundrum, which keeps individuals apart. A synthesis between an object and one on the way out: a set of circumstances where one is destroyed. Murder is an act which affirms what it is to be human. You have ceased to exist. You have become nothing at all . . . As another clings to your calves, gasps for air, tastes death and splutters for



more time. You have replaced him. You will console him. You will perpetuate him. You no longer exist, separate from his fate, anterior to his lust, different from his purpose, unreconciled to his capture. You are the dead. We are the dead. You are the dead in full knowledge of your terminal existence. This is a pageant. Since those who are guilty, acted under duress. Anyway, it is hardly fitting to cast aspersions on a dead man, one who scarcely belongs to the living. Who feels the emotions drain from him, like water from an estuary, once it has been dammed. You scarcely do such a man an honour, by remarking on the funeral, which has become his life. After all, in the consignment of another to the earth, the murderer all but joins his victim.

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In any event, whatever you had in mind, you better do it to him before he does it to you. A circumstance which does not lack a sexual component. Although it does its best to deny it. Sex is the mark of the beast married to the spirit of the divine. All at once, it is human, all too human, more than human, less than human, in quick succes-

sion. It deflates and inflates, proposes and disposes, wracks and ennobles, in so far as it delivers longevity. Eros guarantees perpetuation; barrenness the dearth of seed which promises entombment. An absence which curtails the spread of genealogy's arbour. Mutes the striving and sweating for a new life, to be had, shorn in exodus, from out the old. Yet men and women differ in their attitudes toward it. Sex for a woman is a pleasure which may beget a child. Sex for a man is the power which impregnates new life. Humans are sexually mutilated in different degrees. The one suffers from a surfeit of love; the other a diluted experience. The equation where sex diminishes emotion; needs to be scotched. Yet it contains a truth which is falsified by its obviousness. Since sexuality and emotion do vie with one another, across a lattice, a contextual framework, of masculine and feminine interaction. Woman demands of man, what he cannot give, for fear of falling silent before the world. She demands sincerity; he contextualizes its obedience. She requests intuitive permanence; he allows abstract justification. For him morals are expedient in so far as they justify power relations. She considers morals as absol-



utes. In short, he cannot cope with the demands for constancy and integrity, which she wrings from his soul. Hatred is often a result. Since misogyny needs to be strong in its uncertainty. Sex carries the hatred, once emotion has absconded. Imagination facilitates its tirade; once pornography becomes its vehicle. Pornography diminishes those who articulate it. The Oxford Dictionary definition of pornographer could just as well be: noun., vicious charlatan, mountebank, businessman of physiological sweat posing as mystic; procurer of cardboard harlots to masturbate to; the raw material of sadistic daydreams; he provides the object; the voyeur prescribes the torment. An impotent fornicator; Onan lurks behind Casanova's mask. The pornographic imagination ranges far and wide, elusive as well as allusive. As such, it proves to be a very male view of the world. Much rubbish has been written about pornography, itself symptomatic of the times, agonizing over its literary importance. When does commonplace sauciness stop and genuine erotica take the field (?) and so on. Yet erotica remains the pornography of the literary imagination: sophisticated enough to prompt erection in educated sen-

sibilities. Whereas, pornography is an aberration, a succession of movie stills, bluish in tint, anti-humanist in intent, conjured up by a peculiarly male sensibility. Fictive romance, sensitive sojourn, respectful adoration and mature passion are rare for men because they are demanded by women. Woman, as such, strives for a sorrowfulness she will never achieve. She inhabits a world of passion; which is also a world of misconception. She disinterrers a romance; which is doomed to destruction. Her pain is one of abstract grief, at the hands of an urge which she cannot understand. Pornographic sexuality is an admission that passion is spent although its echo remains to disturb. It is a reflex action as well as a defence mechanism. Men accommodate the brutishness of the ape and the sentimentality of the small-boy. The number of men who rape is few; the number content to stare at nakedness huge. Yet the side-long glance at a mass of paste-and putre is insufficient to explain the fascination involved. The anathematization of what was once thought sacred. Pain, in order to express the efficacy which makes it sensual, needs to justify itself in the light of its remorse. As Albert Camus pointed



out in '*La Peste*', pain is an abstraction. Sexual pain; flogging, beating, manacled bed-steads and interrupted disinterrments are intensities of abstraction, pornographic functions. Where persons of either sex, leap about on the red-hot coals of a desire. The puritan condemns sex as evil, because it fulfils the demands of the heaven, the hell of his creation does not allow for. Lasciviousness is a stimulant for withholding pleasure. In such circumstances, Eros is a devotion to the relish with which sensuousness is not enjoyed. Scatology is nothing if not an attempt at recreation. Where we observe the tumescence which foretells fecundity. A riotous wish, divested of its love and turned rampant on a female form. A Sadeian woman, an object of intense arousal, pursued as a vehicle for satisfaction. Yet, the mythology of sexual practice intones, that the infliction of pain proves sensually wanton. Moreover, that pleasure in cruelty is a sexual pleasure. An anti-nomian precept, so denominated because it rejects moral law, as a thing of no use under sexual dispensation. Where the human body is reduced to a range of responses. It is impressed upon; locked in a muscular spasm, where each limb, every

anatomical fissure, is subject to stress and strain. There are two strands of thought which lie parallel here: the first abuses woman to forsake dependence upon her. The second, castigates her memory because it is no longer germane to the conflicts entered into. Both processes involve similar conceits: first, that the fallen conception of sex, still entails enough love, to have the woman enjoy, however spuriously, the depiction of her own degradation. Second, that the man who turns to pornography is interested in women at all. Furthermore, now that porn can dispense, with the object of its usage, it must make itself relevant, to those persons who dreamed it up in the first place. This means that pornography expresses a homosexual, and consequently, a perverse usage. Perverse, in the sense, that it becomes impossible to distinguish it from sado-masochism. A situation where men tear at one another, in a desperate attempt, to remove themselves from being close to one another. In a manner which resembles the middle-aged man who pays a prostitute to whip him. It is in this manner that the medieval painters of the Flemish School, and above all, Hieronymous Bosch, became relevant. The enduring fas-



cination of these craftsmen is their depiction of torment and damnation. Upon which the Christian consciousness of the West became fascinated and unhealthily attracted. It was as if these pictures represented a secret aspiration of the faithful: a tortuous longing for a release from all constraint: a transvaluation of all values into no values whatsoever. As though this was the price to be paid for the loyalty of the flock. Moreover, when we come to the twentieth century treatment of the Jew, we see a similarity between the deathcamps and the images which seduced Christians for centuries.

States are built on mountains of skulls. A state is a revolution against nature; enacted in alliance with nature. States represent nature in so far as no-one rebels against their moral squalor. A regime is an example of fructified stasis; a concrete anathema, constructed, on the type of falsification which besmirches everything it touches. It renders foul what was once whole; unclean what was once pristine. Consider its banquet of life; the Babylonian medley, of hunger at the door of plenty, the spectacle of misery at the circumference

of gluttony. Where we shall find the monarch crapulent, his financier's bilious and the highpriest defrocked, habitless, his pudenda active among the upturned divans.

A civilization rests on force and comes into existence when every scream is part of the design. Inhumanity is always sacrosanct: we're not dealing with morality here: that is a matter for the individual. Collectives deal not in morals but expediency; not in conscience but judicious expenditures of force. A ruler really has power in his hands when he can decide what's wrong and what's right. From moment to moment, enforcing this, prescribing that, the one an offence, the other a beneficence, whilst the blood cries out to high heaven for a reckoning it won't receive. Here, each scream has its place, every anthromorphic prodding of the psyche, resolves itself, in a patchwork quilt of condemnation and reward. Rulers enforce criminal jurisdiction when they decide what's crime and whose committed it. Law was created from its opposite. Law was created to forestall its opposite. Law is legalized crime: sanctimonious mendacity for those who mulct the system. Murder's



still the name of the game. Yesterday it was criminal; today it is the law. But now it's undergone a subtle alchemy: it no longer strikes at those who defy a particular will. Once men fought one another to escape themselves. Now they fight themselves not to break with one another. Those who do so: 'break the law.' Send a shiver of chiliaric fear down a bourgeois nape: set up the demand for retribution from a thousand throats. Originally, men went in fear of each other. Now they go in fear of the law. The sum total of their fear of each other: an emotional minefield, where trespass warrants retribution, against the peace of mind vouchsafed those who obey the law. All citizens who obey the law are guaranteed protection under it. Ensured of safe passage and lenient treatment; providing they lower their heads and go about their business. The citizen must be part of the consensus which erects the guillotine if he doesn't want to mount its steps. The criminal is neither a victim, or a saint, or a charlatan or a revolutionary, but a moral absence, an ethical lacuna, through whose actions human savagery expresses itself. Man rejects the morality in the name of which he is condemned. What once seemed

expedient; now seems criminal. Men of power and criminals are brothers under the skin which is why they hate one another and seek to usurp one another. Judges are criminals, grown secure, on the punishment of what they should be held accountable for. Society sees in its underworld a mirror-image of itself, transubstantiated into an appeal, soon destined to lose its flavour. Since crime is the escapism of the poor, the deranged, the power-hungry and the immoral. It is society's plaything; the tumour whose colours are beautiful in their ugliness and ugly in their conception of beauty. Crime is the license which society allows itself. The assemblage of the rope and the trap-door or the icy hiss of the guillotine are mechanisms of purgation and celebration. Declarations of propitiation, towards the murderous fear, which characterizes humanity once stripped of its decorous veneer. The public execution is psychotic. It disregards the depravity which society keeps under wraps. Society has always enjoyed executions. They cater to diverse tastes, at one level, they are exercises in the management of pain, at another, they are self-righteous enough to be enjoyed without the intercession of



guilt. The death penalty is incivility chasing its own exculpation. Capital punishment assures man that he is free enough to condemn another man to death. Parliamentarians who block its abolition, align themselves with Marat, when he told Thomas Paine, that he was not yet sufficiently versed in that school of liberty, which enabled one man to put another to death. Nevertheless, executions have a paragonic effect on the socially insecure. They reassure an observer as to the correctness of the behaviour which has kept him from the scaffold. Bear-gardens entertain the simple; mollify them in the conceit that might is right. A situation where the punishment fits the crime, an eye is plucked for an eye. Inshort, justice has been seen to be done, God's in his heaven and all's right with the world. Public execution is a spectator sport which initiates the multitude into the ways of their rulers. None too successfully, because the contagion clings to the intellectual who needs to justify himself. The crowd identifies with the object of defilement. If he dies. They no longer bear responsibility for what it was, inside them, which perished with him. They have masturbated; yet the ground was inhospit-

able, incapable of nurturing the upshot of their waylaid seed. All that remains with them is a feeling of exhaustion. They desire nothing better than to stream away home and take a bath.

Humanity is weak where it wishes to be strong, and weak because of the strength with which it wishes, to be other than it is. Consequently, it rarely has the stomach to implement its desires. Execution is handed to willing, professional hands. Delegated and mercenary: whose passion lies in thoroughness, the virtue characterizing the task entrusted to them.

Power wishes to abolish the orgasm. The emotional characteristics of such a world are hatred, vengeance, glorification in the humbling of an enemy and self-abasement. Power politics is the charnel house of modern man: its efficacy, self-deception; its instrument, the law and the mechanism for punishing those who fall foul of it. Initially, men used violence to get their way unaccompanied by due process of law. If any law existed; it was the type which prevails in a jungle. Nevertheless, such processes of intrigue, manipulation, deceit, jeremaid



and sublimated ardour lacked neither rhyme nor reason. They had their inner fulfilment; their sense of beauty even when disfigured by the ugliness of mortal squalor. In short, they were a refinement of a barbarous truth, an intentional avoidance of one reality through its replacement with another. Like a cadre of Vietcong (but without the discipline ideology provides) who could sever the arms of children, inoculated by doctors against disease. The ordinary citizen is a ragbag of every known moral disease: a craven creature, no longer a man, not yet a corpse, whilst scarcely an individual. He breathes, eats, sleeps, defecates and fornicates, in due order, scarcely aware of the broken rattle within himself. For twentieth century man life is work followed by television. The streets are too violent to go out at night but why bother, when a sanitised picture of the world can be brought to your hearth by a large corporation. Apathy is a state of mind well disposed toward cruelty. The executioner is the common man writ large, his ideas mere prejudices encountered in life, his philosophy second hand, his aesthetics nil, his moral sense blunter still. All National Socialists are good family men. Man fears

nothing more than himself, and this condemns him, to the better side of his worst aspect. A condition of total extremity and almost total need and debasement because of that need. Evil is the face of total need. The scream which requires the total satiation of its fears; the primal yell, which haunts the human imagination in paint from Poussin onwards; green, yellow, brown, white, slavish, head askew, mouth open and screaming from the hell generated by its torment. The death-mask of human futility which shrieks into the wind. A reverberating nightmare which articulates the human animal's total need. An assurance which can never be vouchsafed and consequently tears the heart out of its sympathiser. The purposive statement of an inarticulate cry. A high-pitched whine which bemoans the circumstances which facilitate its expression. The terrorist terrorizes those already ashamed of their own shadow. Fear of the unknown means fear of the criminal who inhabits the unknown half of the human heart: humanity's gaoler, the gnarled despot with scarlet eyes, blue-bearded, with finger-nails dirty from rattling the keys which imprison the inmates of conscience; the malcontents of disorder;



the aesthetic dilletants whose medium is blood; the outcasts who can't avoid imprisonment. We relish their incarceration in so far as we identify with our absence from it. They deserve to die; to rot, sclerotic in their twilight days, so that we can draw in gulps of air, feel the sun on our backs and not bother to think about death. They make it easy for us; we make it miserable for them. *C'est la vie*. Consequently, the well-placed terrorist bomb throws us into panic and confusion. We feel defenceless before the onslaught of our baser natures. We are caught in the vice of contradictory impulses, the backlash of the state, whose sole aim is to maintain its order, and the violence of the revolutionary, who wants to create a new order. Pulled between incompatible forces the individual chooses the most powerful. A man or woman seeks safety in authority which recognizes their abasement. People have no love for dictatorship but they will always support it against anarchy. Lawlessness fills them with horror because the law exists to safeguard their complacency. If you wish to uphold the law, advocate that someone breaks it and the majority of 'good citizens' will come flocking to your

banner. The reason why the far right must smash the system, in order to acquire the votes of the middle-classes. Fascism is controlled lawlessness: the holding in of emotion in order to vent it in controlled circumstances. Fascism is a complex phenomenon which thrives on complexity in order to justify itself. It epitomises the discipline of an abandoned purpose: it is taut, inconstant, febrile, aggressive, it subordinates emotion. The appropriate metaphor would be the tension in a clenched fist. Fascism stands for an inversion of the position which people usually adopt. In any event, whatever you had in mind, you better do it to him before he does it to you. A circumstance which does not lack a sexual component. Although it does its best to deny it. Human beings were born to die alone but their entire life proves to be an evasion of that fact. Death is too excoriating a prospect, it doesn't just smash the dinner-glass, it ensures that the shards created bite into the flesh. All men are cowards when it comes to the matter of their own death. Yet such anxieties can be overcome. If we become responsible for what we are; live in accordance with what we are. Refuse anything which wouldn't pass muster



before the tribunal of our innermost heart. In such a state, each dilemma becomes a matter of life and death. At such a pitch; we are truly alive, which means that we accept fully the consequences of our own death. Indeed, we are then dying each moment we're alive. Yet such an achievement is not to be had without a certain cost: the recommendation that moral earnestness is futile. That instead of diminishing fear; it enhances it: forces man to look at his imagination: as he sees mouths bent backwards; screaming out their pain.

Insanity dislocates the nervous system from its axis. Mind and body lose the symmetry which both require. Hence, in the most extreme states, a multiplicity of personas, compete with one another, for mastery of the mind. The discursive intellectual sees deeper still. He sees a society where mounds of corpses left redundant in the Nazi's wake were thought by many to have deserved their fate. Who then, in circumstances such as these, is wholly sane? The truth is that we are all in some sense mad. We are liable, in that moment of madness, to go over to the other side. We are sick because we have never diagnosed the possi-

bility of curing our sickness. We are immoral because we lack the propensity to behave morally. In that moment of madness we are too nervous to attempt anything with anyone unless they're a corpse first. Necrophilia is the privilege of the naturally human. The lividly swinish, the essentially bestial, the thing from which we emerged, and he stands there, behind every lawyer, every judge, every mendacious cess-pit of a politician. You will find him there. The man with the gun, the individual of the first cause, the articulator of the original violation: Cain; the man who killed Abel.

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Art hates ideologies because it is the one that encompasses all the others. If it has a truth, it is the one that says: an artist can stage a revolution with a brush in the hand, he uses to wipe his backside. Art makes one life immortal: it disdains the critic, after all, all critics are failures. The critic is a parasite on the artist he chooses to batten on. He interprets without understanding and disseminates in accordance with what he thinks the market will bear. He is the scientist shorn of his laboratory coat; the sur-



geon who cannot read the signs entrails leave. Science and art are brought into conflict by those who have the interests of neither near to their hearts. Science studies the objects used to describe the world, their interaction, interrelation, correspondence and divergence: it is a body of knowledge dedicated to unravelling the unfathomable. Science deals in a cultivated mendacity. All of which is not to say that science apes art: science is the antithesis of art. The one creates everything out of nothingness: the other defines nothing in accordance with its definition of everything. Science is neither morally neutral nor creatively dead; it is alive with the possibility of good or ill. The intelligence which creates lasers, to burn the cataracts out of eyes; injected marble into verdant irises. The scientist is neither a devil nor a saint; the artist is a devil who aspires to sainthood.

the axe bit into the monkey's anus

-Bataille

Sex is the mark of the beast married to the spirit of the divine. Since religion hates the body; although it intends to refashion it. Yet this is an insufficient explanation. The reason behind religion's confusion lies deeper than carnal animosity. It penetrates

to the deeper levels of the human psyche where we stumble across the essential differences between men and women. The fact that men and women are not two halves of the same whole. After all, woman is of the earth; the mother or benefactress; the articulator of maternal instincts. While man's genius lies in abstractions. Consequently, there is a coldness, even a sterility, to the male intellect: when it is separated from the blood which feeds the brain. You see, men and women are crucially different, one from another, but at the same time, both share correspondences. In other words, men and women are born along a continuum of male and female characters. Yet no compromise can restrain distrust between the sexes in the realm of love. After all, the naturalness of sexual intercourse always involves a certain violence: perhaps the desire to give birth over a grave. Reminiscent of the trajectory which wends its way toward death. The futility which lies at the heart of the human. The caesarian section which liberates only to leave a tell-tale scar. Since women define themselves in the love of their men. Unsure of the motives which make them appealing. Since the poet fears woman as an agent of



the material. The materialist, on the other hand, fears woman as an embodiment of the spiritual. One of the few ways in which men and women can reach one another is in the realm of art. The ecstatic union of the senses in the production of an artifact. All genuine art is an attempt to give voice to human suffering. Within the mores, the principles and beliefs which underlie its execution contrary impulses of men and women intertwine. Virginia Woolf was right to assert that art is androgynous. It is given to neither the maximization of the masculine or the feminine but the penetration of one by the other. The male principle in the arts is the strength of composition. The female principle is the synthesis which brings ideas to a climax. Yet art is a solution which falls prey to the myth of its manufacture. Especially when it is confronted with sensual clamour: the derangement which typifies the sexuality of modern man.

Eroticism is a form of forgetting: a denial of privacy.

Instead, the body is split-up.

Latterday sexuality resembles garage mechanics: the pouring of liquids into empty vessels. Sex vies with religion inor-

der to exhume a tortured humanity. Human beings are afraid of carnal abandonment; yet tortured by its loss. Sodom and Gomorrah reveal forbidden fruits which turn putrid at its touch. Society condones Eros in private but suppresses it in public. Even so, what it condemns has a way of haunting the imagination. Eroticism always dissatisfies itself. It prevents what it wants through its insistence on what it cannot have. Men idealize what women cannot be in order to debase what they see before them. Men and women differ in their attitude to love: women consider it a form of imprisonment which liberates: men a form of liberation which imprisons. Women would surrender everything except the desire to dominate. The female insists that love is a form of entrapment which outwits itself: love is free; yet circumscribed: a woman submits to it in order to dominate her partner. While a man misunderstands the reciprocity which love demands: to him, affection is a transitory moment not a contractual obligation. Masculine love is the comfort of strangers. For a man, love resembles a form of recognition, nothing more. Women confuse love with sex; men choose one to the exclusion



of the other. In such circumstances, sex becomes a vehicle where emotions are transferred to an exploitable object. Male sexuality is an exercise in the pornographic imagination. A fact which confuses eroticism with the mechanics of power. Something which pits male against female, each mutually misunderstanding the other. As a result, pornography becomes a liberation from the possible into the actual. It sinks to the nadir of rape, derangement and degradation. At once achieving a sort of holiness: a recognition that the damned and the benighted are cousins under the skin. In such a situation, man is nothing at all, an emptiness – hollow, rotten, devoid of substance, a nut rotting from the inside. A person whose pain becomes the stimulus to a meaningless existence. Where man has seen the death of God only to replace him with nothing save his sense of absence. It is lucky for women that this pornography exists on the level of abstraction; of engrossment, with a bias towards the male. Since rapacity soon sickens of the prospect of its recreation and turns to its own kind. As we already know pornography is more concerned with power than with sex: and the one can become a substitute for the

other. Indeed, power exercise pursued unto death is an exercise in the erotics of power. What else is the S.S. man killing the Jew than a sexual fanaticist driving private passion to public mania?

In fact, he is much else besides, but that need not detain us here. Human beings are cruel when life offers them no other possibility of being good. At the heart of these cruelties lies capital punishment. The execution by the state of those who discern the lie upon which the state is based.

Prostitution is the retribution men bring to bear on women because of the beauty of their appearance. It is the negative side to the idealization of the fairer sex. It resembles the lust of fathers for their daughters because of their inability to face their wives. Thus, it is related to paedophilia. Women rarely desire their sons, for her, conquest is a form of spiritual domination: they want the soul rather than the body. While men want the body to the exclusion of the soul. Something which leads to the belief that love is a conspiracy invented by the female sex. Prostitutes are made not born. They are created by the fathers who desire their flesh. The mothers who deny their bodies and abandon their daughters



to them. They come from all classes at all times because the sexes are not yet equal in the sense that one can enslave the other. They serve to remind us that men are divided against themselves. In such circumstances, money purchases what men could not otherwise afford. Yet prostitution is an exercise in hatred rather than love. Since it purchases what would not be sold were it not for economic necessity.

Prostitution divides women into those whose flesh is for sale and those who are disgusted by the prospect. Likewise, men find themselves split between rape and neurotic impotence: assault and battery on one hand; castrated envy on the other. A fear of erection which stultifies the growth of those muscles with guarantee sex. Men fear women because of the demands they make upon them. The fear that women will drain them of their energy. The anxiety that a woman's desire is insatiable, unfulfillable, liable to exhaust a man and leave him defenceless in his mother's arms.

Such pornography is an exercise in the beauty of degradation. In the beginning the body was manipulable; any impact made an impression on it, it was almost as if it did not exist, and if it did it remained subject

to the vagaries of impact. No wound ever healed in the soft, tentative flesh: rather a fungus covered the body, grown out of the entrails which had long since burst their bounds. Alternately, women may be pitied as carriers of disease; while vilified as destroyers of honour: in other words, men agree to dominate or submit depending on the circumstances. Thus, the world of the sexual image is a sado-masochistic terrain: typified by an endless recurrence of images; intertwined; looped together; spurting backwards and forwards, in an endless fluidity of sexual play and counter-play. A kinetic fierceness which links coitus with defecation: the excretory with the sexual glands, orifices and functions: in a stream-of-conscious association which links child-rape, castration, excretion and orifice-related sex together, at any one time, in the mind of a normal man. Something which sends him tumbling toward the crucifixion of men and women as sexual beings. The murder of the demi-monde whose throat is cut at the moment of climax. The eventual inclusion of homosexual desire in a polymorphous sexuality; when there are no more throats to be cut and humanity exists, tied to its flesh, susceptible to pain:



in a situation where the teeth of the dead slaver the flesh of the living. Freud was right: civilization begins with the repression of the nightmare we have just witnessed. Fascism attempts to replace it with something else. Yet fascism is only radical insofar as it expresses man's fear of death in the desire to inflict it. Sodomy uses pornography because it cannot recreate itself. What is homosexuality? In one sense homosexuality is misogynistic because it denies women the love which is their due. In another sense it is an unavoidable calamity of fate. A result of the environment in which individuals grow to maturity: when we bear in mind that homosexuals are born and not made. We call them names: lesbian, invert, zoophyte, urnate and so forth. Yet when we look at them we see ourselves. Homosexuality detects the man in the woman in order to free the woman in the man. Homosexuality is a form of heterosexual attraction between man and woman, effeminate man and masculine man-woman, pathic and more active bugger and so forth. In such matters, disgust is a better indicator of honesty than indifference. The whine of the invert is insouciant: always imperfectly masculine

because suggestively girlish and insincere. Yet sodomy is far more than skittishness when confronted with a mule's rear end. It depends on opportunity, ambience, shuffle, jive, heel and yell: foreplay in the prison-yard: grunts of satisfaction in the barracks after lights-out. Homosexuality balks at society's disapproval. Remember: sex is the mark of the beast married to the spirit of the divine. After all, what is a theologian's ecstasy if not enjoyment of a Houri in the dark. You see, religion condemns the penetrative pleasures it enjoys in other forms. Truly, hell is heaven for the Archbishop dreaming of oral sex. Hell is heaven for those who look at it from the other side. God cast Lucifer down to hell because he entertained thoughts above his station. Here, what was once human, and what was once animal, mingle together: in a manner which resembles a painting by Hieronymous Bosch. Where a man entertains the trunk of a lion, the head of an insect and the hair of a cheetah. While foul toads suck at his eyes. The whole melodrama suffused with an unhealthy glow – a cobalt blue. If we have taken the Flemish school, more accurately, one of its chief practitioners, out of context, it is only to illustrate what



their pictures inferred. More to the point, what the theology of their work, barred them from abstracting in the way they did. Torment appeared to be a *tabula rasa*. Cruelty and eroticism are intertwined. In such a climate, the struggle between men is seen to have a sensual edge. This imputes a feminine prize to the object of masculine strife.

In the beginning, there was man, but also woman, because the prospect of one could not exist without the other. Yet they participated unequally in the struggle for existence. What might be called the struggle against death. In such a contest, men grew strong as against women and other men.

Lesbianism can't produce a child. The third sex is barren. Their children are made of spleen. As Shakespeare put it: their children were a gall to them. But this was only Lear; shouting at himself.

Yet, in another sense, love between two women has a certain appropriateness. When we bear in mind how much men hate women without admitting it.

Lesbianism is the love of two women for one another. It is complicated because men love women and vice versa. In this case, a woman resembles a man in his lust for a

woman. Consequently, a woman who experiences the desires of a man resembles one. She has the small breasts, thick wrists and straight flanks of a man. In short, she is the equivalent of a man inverted in the female sex. She is an invert, biologically speaking. We call her names: lesbian, invert, zoophyte, urnate and so forth. Yet when we look at her we see ourselves. Homosexuality detects the man in the woman in order to free the woman in the man. Homosexuality is a form of heterosexual attraction between man and woman, masculine woman and effeminate man – woman, invert and bi-girl and so forth. In such matters, disgust is a better indicator of honesty than indifference. The whine of the invert is insouciant: always imperfectly masculine because suggestively girlish and insincere. As a result, the male homosexual discerns the female in the male. In this way, Jean Genêt celebrated the femininity of a Nazi storm-trooper. Something which recognizes the undercurrent of sado-masochistic sex in fascism. The fact that its adherents wear skin-tight clothes; jock-straps of tiger skin, fierce crotches, leather trusses and the like. Always black in colour, the colour of death, against which blood shows up best.



At once, the representation of death and the desire to offset it, with rebirth. If you like, such things represent the necrophilia which lurks in human sexuality. After all, the vampire legend is nothing if not a ballad to necrophilia. The vampire is male because he needs to be dominant and potent. His lips are full, red with the blood of others. While his skin is pale and gelatinous. His victims are usually female. An indication of the drives which lie behind death-bed agonies. After all, emission in the mouth of a corpse is hardly an act of bravado. You see, the vampire represents the attractiveness of things which must be avoided. He represents the appeal of the forbidden. In other words, to have sexual intercourse with a corpse is to embrace what we are about to become. Didn't Edmund say that he would be Goneril's in the ranks of death?

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In short, this is an attempt to understand the Marquis de Sade. A man who was destroyed by the revolution he created. There was something bad in him. Baudelaire was right: when you want to discuss cruelty we always go back to de Sade. Since

civilization serves to corrupt cruelty rather than man. He remains as cruel, uncivilized and indifferent to the plight of others as he was before, with one important exception, such an attribute has less chance to show itself. After all, cruelty and fear are proportionate to one another. The greater the one the greater the other: you leave one with less chance to manoeuvre, once criminal behaviour's been taken out of the hands of the individual and given to the collective. Then you might create a civilization. A civilization rests on force and comes into existence when every scream is part of the design.

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One is reminded of Max Stirner, when he said that he was free in no state. Moreover, Stirner went on to say that he was the enemy of the state. According to him, the individual has nothing to say to the state, except 'Get out of my sunshine!'

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Politics is a matter of life and death. This can be seen in Memling's triptych: in the first picture there's a woman; in the second a skeleton and in the third a devil who



dances in a salamander's mouth. In many ways they represent socialization: first, an individual finds himself, then he discovers another and realizes his mortality, finally he succumbs to the politics of the society which destroys him.

In the beginning, men were suspicious of each other. Particularly, when they realized that introspection was affected by the presence of others. Consequently, the French film-maker Jean-Luc Godard was right, when he said that politics was about everything or nothing. Jean-Luc Godard was a post-modernist film-maker. He flirted with communist China. He criticized Eastern Europe from a maoist perspective. He was not altogether wrong about Mao, however. Since the communist dictator knew that political power grew out of the barrel of a gun.

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As we said before, men were suspicious of each other. They viewed each other with circumspection. They looked into one another's eyes with trepidation. After all, no-one wants to be a vigilante. No-one wanted to destroy what they didn't possess. In a natural state, men are reduced to their

lusts. They are like the infant, who discerns little, except reflections of himself. Such a creature stands on the threshold of Being. He is in a state of flux. He is disconsolate and empty. He knew that he could have enjoyed life; if he'd been born alone. But this pleasure is denied him, by the presence of others. You see, a neighbour's substance, his smell, militates against our enjoyment of life. How can we enjoy life when another is blocking our view? Your life began in the womb: unless your mother had the good sense to abort you. Suddenly, when you expected to leave; you were expelled. You ended up on a dung-heap; where you played with the faeces. But do not despair, gentle reader, this is only a metaphor. After all, we sense God in our anus during the moment of orgasm. But we were talking about the social contract: the moment when two men confront each other, in order to survive. When they recognize that they're no longer alone; no longer care-free; no longer divine; no longer Jehovah in his garden; but more a snake slithering in another's grasp. According to the Bible, Adam and Eve gave birth to Cain and Abel who set about one another with a vengeance. You see, one



plus one equals two: but a third can claim victory when two individuals exhaust one another in the struggle for dominance. Authority emerges during the struggle of each against all. Especially when individuals demand that someone steps in between them. This is a precedent in human affairs. Henceforth, individuals intervene in the disorders they see around them. They amass wealth; and gain status. Such individuals consort with one another, and have offspring. They grow into an aristocracy which rules over those around them. For the first time in human history, a class society has been created. Now violence is used against those who disturb the peace. Eventually, such punishments are regularized into a system of laws. Hideous punishments: beheadings; ritual disembowelments; hanging, drawing and quartering become part-and-parcel of jurisprudence. They guarantee public order; without them civilization could not exist. Aristocratic societies are slave-states. They are epitomized by an absence of morals. Certain codes of conduct do exist, but bourgeois morality is absent. Every sexual peccadillo is catered for: slave-girl and master fornicate in the sun. While in the dark every

inhibition is relaxed. In such circumstances, it's no surprise that the bourgeoisie uses puritanism against its enemies.

Industrialization proceeded apace during the nineteenth century. In this society, wealth created class rather than the other way around. Now, value is placed upon the production of a thing; rather than the mastery of an object. The bourgeoisie created a religion which accompanied their upward mobility. John Calvin's ideas about election were as good as any other. After all, Calvinism is only a modern version of Augustinianism. The aristocracy resisted and went under before industrialization. Sometimes it was destroyed; in other places it was co-opted. Occasionally, the aristocracy instigated change in order to survive. The poor suffered and died as before: the serfs were thrown off the land and into the factory: where they lost their limbs in the machines. Finally, production exhausted itself and profit was made at the margin. Marginal utility theory was erected, in order to define a corporate society. Capitalism restricted competition through monopoly, in order to sustain the market. Social democracy allows the working-class a stake in the system without upsetting commodity



markets. Trade union leaders exist to negotiate, at the expense of their members. Although another tendency does exist, known as communism, which threatens the system. Communism is a system which concentrates power in the hands of a dissident section of the bourgeoisie. It can only seize power in conditions of war, famine and civil emergency. It is a secular faith, similar to the theocracies which rationalism discredited. It believes in a God; but this time it's history. It believes in an essence, but this time it's the material nature of existence. It believes in democracy, but everything must be vetted by the leadership beforehand. It refutes ideology, while projecting its own imaginings. Marxism is the tyranny of an idea. To get on the wrong side of the argument is a matter of life and death. After all, to kill a man because his notion of Hegel differs from yours is a perverse testament to the power of ideas. Consequently each section of the party competes for the destruction of its ideological rivals. But the argument over theory does not end there, it extends to the society. Every citizen must adopt a position in relation to the leading arguments. To argue incorrectly, to fill in the wrong side

of the equation, is to fall foul of the law. Something which involves surrendering yourself to the justice of the people. This involves submission to torture by a revolutionary police force. A police force which enforces the ruling ideas of the revolution. These men resemble Torquemada and Savonarola, modern inquisitors of the intellect rather than persecutors of the spirit. Men who go seeking the truth with red-hot iron, determined to find it. Dialecticians of the flesh, who believe that those who refute their accusations, are mystified by ideology. For them, ideological perversity is the desire to think differently from the party. Remember: they will beat you if you don't agree with them. In the end, if you're not to be killed, you'll be thrown into a labour-camp. The type of factory which is run like a prison in order to service the command economy. The mechanics of communist terror are straightforward. It has a lot to do with the vanguard rôle of the party. In Kampuchea, for instance, those who were not members of the party were liable to be condemned by it. You see, the party was an elect, set above the people. It answered to no-one but itself. The people answered to no-one but the party. Party discipline



was such that the slightest infraction of the rules was punished by death. Only the party was revolutionary. The people by definition were counter-revolutionary since they were not members of the party. In Cambodia, the class-enemy was the people themselves. Consequently, any sign of dissent, on their part, was punished with death. That's why the regime killed so many in such a short time. It slew a million as an after-thought – with the arrogance of a teenager armed with a kalashnikov. Men and women were herded into mass-graves, because they loved them too much to admit their faults. It was an excess of sympathy, blinded by an absence of compassion. They tried to alter the human shape, to fit a procrustean bed. They committed plastic surgery on a face which had not been damaged. They cut off our legs, so that we could walk on our knees. You see, they wanted to begin again. They wanted this to be a new beginning; a 'year zero'. But the process was too difficult, it resembled an abortion rather than a birth. Various forms of left communism, such as Trotskyism, are opposed to this. They oppose the secret police because they are one of its targets. The situation is reversed when they are in power. Stalinists

are Trotskyists in power. Trotskyists are tomorrow's stalinists. In turn Trotskyists were yesterday's Stalinists. In reality, terror is a form of permanent revolution. It is the energy which the system needs in order to overcome bureaucracy. On the other hand, state socialism wants bolshevism without terror. They would share the wealth in order to increase demand. But state socialism is a contradiction in terms. After all, the working-class cannot be in power. Such a situation is impossible. It would mean that the people were in insurrection against themselves. A proletariat ceases to be one when it becomes a ruling-class. Consequently, socialism favours the status quo. After all, there have to be grievances if socialists are going to represent them. Liberals, on the other hand, would balance demand and supply to the detriment of consumption. Eventually, they chose to unbalance the budget, in order to increase demand and reduce unemployment. Liberalism is bourgeois guilt. Social security is security for the society against those who could take to the streets. Conservatism, on the other hand, is middle-class self-interest. It has no purpose, except continued inequality. The rich adore it, because it



involves keeping the poor in their place. Conservatism is basically the absence of conscience in a rich man. Property is a crime committed by the rich against the poor. After all, the man who burgles a middle-class home is only reclaiming what's been taken from him to begin with. Conservatism is the philosophy of those with status under law. In other words, it is the idea which protects the wealth of our rulers. It identifies with nationalism because it needs something to give it popular appeal. Nationalism is the emotion which the state creates in order to protect itself. Needless to say, the state is the executive committee of the ruling-class as a whole. Sometimes it uses religion, in order to buttress its authority. Remember: the state-church is nearly always a right-wing party at prayer. In this way, religion is invoked to protect the property of those in power. Conservatism believes that man is superior to woman, black inferior to white and empire preferable to co-existence. It prefers war to peace; although nuclear weapons have put a stop to this. Still, the conservative is always content if he can destroy others, different from himself. The conservative prides himself on

military values. He is authoritarian and masculine. He likes to obey orders and relishes the clean-blow. In short, conservatism has no ideology except self-preservation. It believes in power as an end in itself. You see, power keeps chaos from the door. In turn, it safeguards the interests of those conservatism represents – capitalists, financiers, nationalists and authoritarians of all sorts. Wilhelm Reich described persons who were obsessed with cleanliness as anal in character. According to this definition, many authoritarians are anal in character. Himmler would discipline a man for smoking a cigarette in his presence. They have a great fear of dirt. A morbid sensitivity towards disease, particularly if it is sexual in origin. They exhibit a mortal terror of the body. Their nightmare consists of fluidity: the thing they fear above everything is the free-flow of excrement. Something which brings us to fascism. Fascism is the moral equivalent of venereal disease in the politics of the body. As we have said before, it is a product of insecurity. Fascists love order and cleanliness. They emerge in times of crisis for the middle-class. You see, in moments of crisis the middle-class wants to keep its status and avoid social revol-



ution. This leads their rulers to flirt with fascism, as a solution to the crisis. Fascism is a revolutionary movement which focuses its revolution on a minority, to avoid changing the society. In short, the Jew, the homosexual and the gypsy become the targets for revolutionary activity. By pushing them to the boundary, fascism can redraw the circle, and keep the existing society intact. But what does revolutionary politics mean in relation to a minority which must be subjugated? It can only mean their destruction, which is perceived as a final solution. However, this deals with the crowds who flock to the banner, not with those who carry it. For them, fascism is more powerful; it is more personal and direct. It is, in short, a new religion and a new sense of community. It is an attempt to overcome the alienation of modern life. They seek a new fellowship in destruction. In short, for the fascist veteran, there is no moment more beautiful than when he kills his enemies. You see, fascism gives a sort of aesthetic gloss to the politics of destruction. It is not for nothing that Walter Benjamin accused fascism of incorporating art into politics. When he kills a Jew, the Nazi reaches beyond the mundane. He

defeats banality, by embracing it. One is never so free, as when one dominates another. The nature of his existence flows out of him, when he kills the Jew. In that moment, there is a stillness. It is a moment of threnody. He sees the crystals of blood on the axe, between blows. He is free of himself. He has become action, he is the process of destruction. As Dieu La Rochelle put it, fascist man is the embodiment of action. He epitomizes the severance of spirit and body, heart and head, conscience and intellect. He is the process. He is the movement. This is not what Aristotle meant by catharsis because it involves coprophagy, not defecation. He has become one with the slaughter he perpetuates. It is not for nothing that he wears a swastika on his arm. A symbol of energy – whether it was Hindu, or theosophical or occultistic hardly matters. It was there; and he is present. But he is also absent, his energy is spread across the abattoir he has manufactured. He has died a little, although he has not lived much. He is a sublimite. In the moment of slaughter, he has ceased to exist. Yet he has not died. Moreover, he has re-enacted the moment of his Fuhrer's awakening. He is the beast



in the machine and the machine was man. This is his eucharist, his holy folly, his spilling of blood. He is clean because he has defiled himself. He has died because he has refused to live. But he has lived, at a time when death had no meaning. One of the reasons he has to go on killing is in order to find himself. Suicide, on the other hand, would involve returning to life in too violent a manner. Jung declared that fascism was the collective free-play of unconscious forces. In this he is correct, but he forgets that the superego reinforces its authority. The controlling ego is repressive. It creates a feeling of remorse, which the fascist avoids by escaping into ideology. If ideology fails; he always has his superiors. After all, he was 'only following orders'.

You can see fascism in Peter Brueghel's painting '*The Triumph of the Dead*' which hangs in the Prado. In the foreground, there is an army of skeletons, which lays waste to humanity. The sky is red; and their swords are covered in blood. The skeletons carry banners and pendants. They are waging war against mankind. They seek nothing, but its destruction. In the middle of the picture you can see what looks like a gas-chamber. The skeletons are herding

their victims into it. Where they will fall, suffocated by the gas. You can almost see Auschwitz and Buchenwald in this picture. Inside the oven, the victim's blood will boil. Their brains will stick to the inside of their skulls. They will deliquesce to lower forms of matter. The victims will become grey and transparent. They will resemble musculature and ligament. They have no form and become amorphous. No longer will they be able to suck up their vital fluids from a proboscis. Their bodies will run with a million sores. Increasingly, the bones will burst out of their flesh. They are incapable of decision; they can only think of lust. Eventually their insides will burst forth. Incapable of movement they will choke on their own innards. As has been said, the final moment is one of lust. This is a desire for procreation, an attempt to defeat death. At the edge of existence, what stimulates the brain is an archetype. She is blonde and buxom. She is bronzed, with a garter on her leg. She needs a good fucking. It is no wonder that the third and fourth drafts of Sade's *'Justine'* differ from each other. After all more than a thousand people were executed under his window in the interim. That is why the last manuscript drowns in



a lake of semen and blood. It is a moment of frenzy; the last twitchings of a corpse. Until the maggots eat out the corpse from the inside. A swarm of blue ants, feeding on the carrion. In many ways, such suffering can only be transmuted by art. Art has always attempted to give a voice to human suffering. It is the voice of the damned. Consequently, it appeals to us all. One of the reasons why totalitarian regimes seek to suppress it. As I have said, it has always attempted to give a voice to the human cry. Art is cathartic. It takes the products of the bowels and transforms it into gold. It is not a solution; but it is part of the answer. Nearly all artistic creation begins in the unconscious. Art is a dream about how we should live. But it is more than that, as well. It reflects the world because it reflects personality. The unconscious is creative when it is conscious of itself. The artist interprets society to the individual. The critic interprets the artist to the society. In many ways art is akin to insanity. This is the reason why many artists have been mad. The purpose of the exercise was to bring the individual back to life more violently. A work of art means something different for everyone who comes into contact

with it. The importance of a work lies in the imagination of the beholder. The importance of the work for its creator, is his ability to create another one. In many ways, art is important. If we do not respect it too much. It has much to teach us, if we are already intelligent. In short, it keeps alive the possibility of a society which does not exist. It speaks, with urgency, about a society where one is free to exploit desire. But where individuals are not exploited by one another. It opposes war, by its very violence. After all, an artist can only kill another in his imagination. Corpses may litter his pages, but no-one has been harmed. Only science could create the bomb; only art can deal with its consequences. If this strikes the reader as too idealistic, then let it stand. Let us have an end to prevarication and loneliness! Let us speak our minds. Let us, at least, not be tyrants to ourselves. Marx glimpsed this implicitly, in his repressed text, the '*Grundrisse*' when he realized that the creator is the one who is most free. He is the unalienated man. But this privilege is also a torment because you are aware of death. Mortality haunts your every waking moment. You are done for and you know it. You



are going to die, and your work cannot resolve it. You're finished; but you are still alive. In a sense, this is the highest and the lowest moment of human existence. Death is the only reality, but we have accepted it. Demise is our future, but we are ready to welcome it. Individuals are dying every moment they are alive. Yet this is no cause for rejoicing. It needs sombre reflection; and a growing into the self. In our hearts, we know that Shakespeare was right when he said that the gods plague us for their sport. To them, we were little better than insects. They did not make pleasures of our vices, as the noble Edgar would have it. But tormented us out of vacuity; when they sensed our inner emptiness. As long as we did not have the power to resist. You see, religion has always been a masturbation fantasy for those afraid of life. Only the great artists, like Nietzsche, have been able to say: I have killed God. I no longer need him. I am supreme. The vacuity is in others and not in myself. Sadly, though, moments of ecstasy are rare. Most human-beings are on a treadmill of sorrow. They know they're going to die, and they have repressed it. They have not taken responsibility for it. They have not realized the truth. They have

not understood that men were born screaming; and when they stop; they die.





Jonathan Bowden is one of the most radical minds of Western history, he touches, with an astonishing fusion of madness and cold rationality, on some of the most central aspects of psychic life. He is a great, horrifying, but also vastly illuminating figure.

EGOTIST PRESS

ISBN 1 872181 00 7



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